



Where it ALL began...

The Truth About Trucking

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DUI's, Felonies, Speeding Tickets, Accidents

“Can I still become a truck driver?”

Many CDL truck driving schools continue to lure prospective students into class through the promises of big money and guaranteed employment. The fact is, many trucking companies are hiring new CDL school graduates and getting those unemployed from the recession back to work. That is a good thing.

The problem is that too many of these truck driver training schools are still taking anyone who walks through their door willing to pay the price . . . even when the school knows that their chances of being hired by any motor carrier is next to zero.

CDL students are going into debt for thousands of dollars for the prized **Class A Commercial Driver License** with the understanding that within a few weeks, they will be fully employed and on the road to earning \$50,000 plus per year. Many are told the more realistic figure of \$32,000 annual income, unaware of the dead end that lies ahead. Accepted by the CDL school, these are the students who have speeding tickets, DUI's, accidents and even felonies on their records.

I recently received an email from a CDL graduate who has been unable to obtain employment from any trucking company throughout the United States. Having paid \$6,000 for the commercial license, the school had informed him that the two DUI's and the one felony on his record would be something that they could *“work through.”* Now, back in reality, his \$6,000 CDL is totally useless.

Many of these **CDL training schools** are receiving government grants, accepting students that most likely will not be candidates for the trucking industry. The [National Commercial Drivers License Program Improvement Grant](#) awards [25 million dollars to these schools](#).

- Reference : Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (**SAFETEA-LU**) , [Public Law 109-59, 119 Stat. 1144, 49 U.S.C 31311 and 31313.](#)

If you are considering becoming a professional truck driver and attending the required CDL truck driver training school, remember one thing before you sign on the dotted line and hand over your money or sign the loan papers:

The [Comprehensive Safety Analysis](#) (CSA) has changed the hiring standards of the U. S. trucking industry. Too many CDL students are learning the hard way that the CSA has added serious complications in regards to their hiring chances.

Through the implementation of the CSA, motor carriers are practicing a much stricter hiring process, looking for drivers with the best and most flawless driving and history background. The [Pre-Screen Employment Program](#) (PSP) will provide the trucking company with a three year look-back of the driving record, showing any driving violations; furthermore, it will show a five year look-back of any motor vehicle crashes, relating to those drivers' with experience. Independently, there will be a background check performed for other violations such as DWI, felonies or other such criminal convictions.

As newcomers to the trucking industry, these students have no experience, therefore they will not have a three or five year history, but the company and their insurance carrier will still perform a background check. Any driving violations, along with any criminal data will be discovered. CDL schools know this, yet many will still accept these students in their training program. It is all about the money, regardless that the students will find themselves still unemployed with a worthless commercial driver license.

As motor carriers concern themselves with maintaining the best safety record and safety score possible, they also want to hire those drivers with excellent background checks. It is all about the CSA and the new age of trucking. A recent CDL graduate with an excellent MVR record etc., is just what the company is looking for; this type of new-hire will only add to the motor carrier's safety rating because the graduate has no "history."

Another problem many CDL graduates face, which I have discussed many times, is when they complete CDL training and fail to get started in a job immediately. Once CDL training is completed, there is no time to sit back with a "wait and see" attitude of which trucking company you want to work for.

James McCormack of [Trucking Careers of America](#), a career advisory and job placement company, offers the following advice:

"When you graduate from a trucking school you have a short window to go into trucking. If you exceed that window you have to take a 40 hour refresher course . On the other hand, if you are out of school for 3 years and have never used your CDL, you will most likely be required to take the course all over again."

“If that’s the case, you have two options: go back to a school or go with a company sponsored program. If you choose to go with a company sponsored program there will be a contract involved.”

Major problems I am seeing from recent CDL graduates who are still jobless months after completing training, are (1) they have waited too long after graduating before accepting a job offer; (2) they failed to understand the complications and stricter hiring standards due to the CSA and (3) they have a poor driving record and/or criminal background and fell victim to a CDL training school that took their money anyway, knowing they would be non-hireable.

The U. S. trucking industry has changed. This is the first thing you must understand. The days of moving from job to job or buying a CDL from a CDL school mill and hitting the open road in the big rig are over, and they have been over for some time now. Experienced drivers, along with CDL recent graduates can no longer easily land a truck driving job with violations, accidents and felonies on their records. Even veteran truck drivers are falling prey to the **money-making institution** that the CDL training industry has become.

Mr. McCormack recites another story in regards to a seasoned, experienced trucker:

“Here is an example of the mentality of the trucking industry – I talked to a CDL holder a while back that had 20 years OTR experience. In that 20 year period he worked for only 3 companies. He was an instructor at times, never had a ticket, accident, etc. He was also voted employee of the year on numerous occasions. It doesn’t get any better. The problem was it had been 5 years since he drove. Every company he tried to get hired by said no. He would have to go through full training again before they would consider him. As it turned out, I sent him to a company sponsored program, he fulfilled his contract and afterwards I sent him to (an area company). He’s now making the income he wanted with good home time.”

If a 20 year OTR trucking veteran has to go through this, then as a newcomer to the industry, imagine what kind of record and background history that the motor carrier will want from you. When the CDL school tells a student that prior violations will not be a factor in their hiring ability, they are not being honest and are only looking at pocketing the huge CDL training fee.

Stories of CDL school graduates having been **victimized by truck driving schools** are endless, and it appears to be getting worse; another recent graduate experienced the pitfall of choosing the wrong truck driving school . . . James McCormack explains:

“I just talked to a recent graduate from a school in New York. This graduate paid \$9,800 for CDL training. He financed the loan with his mother as a co-signer. He and his mother were told they guaranteed job placement even though he had a

criminal record. He's now paying \$112 a month for 10 years. He received his CDL, however there is one big problem!"

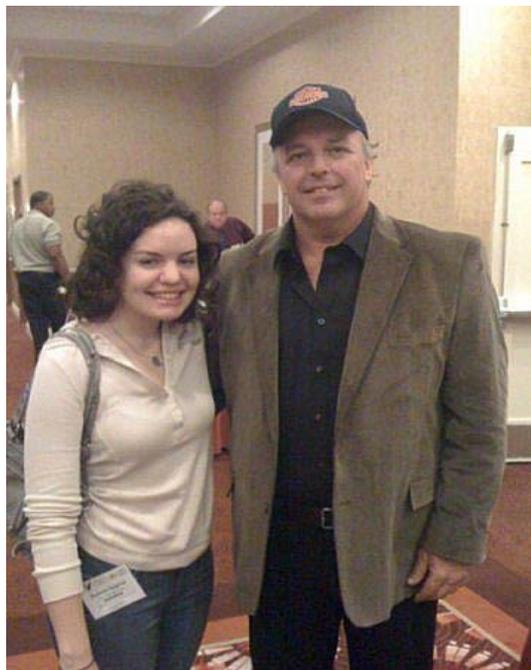
"He was charged with felony possession of cocaine in 5/08 and was convicted on 5/5/09. One year in jail, a drug rehab program and probation. He just finished his probation. Of course he can't get a job, in addition, the school guarantees in writing they will find him a job - SURE ! This is another example of abuse in this industry. There is no way this school should have taken this student. In my opinion, this is financial greed."

Use common sense. Trucking companies require professional, safe drivers and with the CSA, that statement has never been more truthful. If you have recent DUI's, felonies, speeding tickets, accidents and simply a poor driving and safety record, even within the last several years, do yourself a favor . . . keep your money and look for another career.

TRUTH ABOUT TRUCKING, LLC

Sharing information & knowledge to CDL students & new drivers in order to . . .

"Raise the Standards of the Trucking Industry"



Allen Smith with [Roxanna Asgarian](#),
freelance reporter for the NY Times